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The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

DECEMBER 1945

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Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of THE PULPIT

Still Timely!

Two years ago there appeared an unusual editorial in *Life* magazine which was widely quoted. It is still timely. Here is an excerpt:

"The lackadaisical days when it didn't matter much whether you were a Christian or not, may be numbered. You may have to declare yourself more definitely than you ever expected, as to whether you believe in the Word of Christ or not. This choice, if it is really forced on the Christian world, may be the choice that leads finally to the long awaited religious revival; a revival born in the hearts of the citizens of our time, who, when forced to choose, will find no truth, no comfort, and no inspiration elsewhere."

Finding the Way

Two fliers were forced down in the Arctic regions. They set out to walk in the direction of an Eskimo village which they knew. But there were no landmarks to guide them—only snow and ice; and the weather was cloudy, denying them the guidance of the sun. After many hours of tramping, they came back in a big circle to their wrecked plane. Finally, however, they hit upon a sure way to go in a straight line across the barren wastes. They scraped up piles of snow and ice, and as they walked they sighted back across the last two piles and each time built a third in a straight line with them.

That is as good a way as I know to travel through life. Sight back across the two highest points in history—the life of Christ and the teachings of Christ—and then build your own life in line with these. If you do this, you will go straight as an arrow toward the best goal in life. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—*Donald Douds, Miami Shores Community Church, Miami, Fla.*

Saved by a Hymn

Miss Bertha Cassidy of Wuhu, China, told of a Chinese pastor who frequently had to pass between the lines of the opposing armies as he went to visit Anhwei stations in Free China. One day the Japanese found some American flags in a box the pastor was transporting and he was questioned for five hours in an attempt to prove him a spy. He thought his hour had come. Finally the officer found a hymnbook in the box. Opening the book at random he pointed to a hymn and commanded the pastor to start singing. That was "right up his alley," as we say, for he had a good voice and the hymn chanced to be "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." The pastor warmed to his task so well that when he had finished there was loud applause as he was told to depart in peace!—*L. L. Dunnington, First Methodist Church, Iowa City, Ia.*

The Place of the Church

Have we really understood the primary importance of what it is that the churches are trying to do? It is made plain through a word that Lt. Col. James H. Bryan, one of our army chaplains, addresses to Christian people, as quoted by Roy A. Burkhart in his book, *The Church and the Returning Soldier:*

"I have seen hundreds of men disintegrate in body, mind and soul on the very brink of hell. The faces of men without spiritual hope, as they tramp on and on and out to eternity, make me speechless with amazement.

"Place no value on anything you have or on anything anybody else has, until it contributes to the Christian training of your children and that of your neighbors. It is too late to give this training to millions. They will have to blunder their confused way through this hellish age without God and without spiritual equipment which should have been given them around a family altar. You have no right to sleep or eat, with children in your home untaught in the ways of Christ, until you obey the command of God to teach them his Word."—*Frederick M. Meek, Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, Ia.*

No 'Inevitable' Progress!

Samuel Butler, a member of the older generation who believed in automatic and inevitable progress, once said: "Give the world time, an infinite number of epochs, and according to its past and present system, like a coming tide each epoch will advance on each, but so slowly that it can hardly be traced, man's body becoming finer to bear his finer mind, till man becomes not only an angel but an archangel."

Samuel Butler, a militant atheist who was carried away by his o mism, lived in a fool's paradise. W ston Churchill, however, who s the tragic possibilities of total w wrote prophetically in 1924: "N tions who believe their life is at st will not be restrained from using means to secure their existence. . . Among the means which will n time be at their disposal will be ag cies and processes of destruct wholesale, unlimited, uncontrolla Mankind has never been in this p tion before. Without being impro appreciably in virtue or enjoy wiser guidance, it has got into hands for the first time the tools which it can unfailingly accompl its own extermination."

Instead of becoming like an an or an archangel, man, without guidance of high religion, has scended to the level of the beast, has become more like a savage b barian or a demon. The hope of salvation lies not in atheistic comm nism, nazi neo-paganism or the m taristic cult of emperor worshi which have plunged the world int global war. Nor does it lie in materialism of a technological ci ization which worships the things has made; but in a return to the G and Father of all mankind, and the Christian way of life.

How We Crucify Christ

It is said that Rabbi Wise ha picture of Jesus of Nazareth in study. One day a friend asked h "Rabbi, how does it come that y a Jew, have a picture of Jesus your study?" He replied, "The gr est Jew in history." "But," as the friend, "why this particular ture?" (It was a picture of Ch on the cross.) The rabbi replied, "T world's greatest tragedy."

It was the world's greatest tr edy; but before we fly into a rage condemnation of those who w guilty of that crime, let us ans the question: "Why do modern 'g people' continue to do just tha 'kill', or refuse to accept, the t they know?" Did you give cons to the destruction of your life dre your ideal? That was when you c cified Christ again and put him open shame. No greater truth ever been spoken than this, "Ea knows no greater tragedy than death of the soul's ideal."—*Harry Ice, Bethany College, Bethany, Va.*

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The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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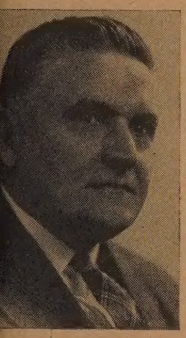
Christ Jesus the Lord

By ERDMANN SMITH

HRIST JESUS the Lord is central, basic, pri- mary, and the source of power in the Christian gion, whether Greek, Roman, Protestant or non- testant evangelical. Too many people, I fear, have in their minds confusion, not to say chaos, with regard to their concept of Christ Jesus the Lord because they are unfortunately inclined to focus their attention almost exclusively upon Jesus the man. Through him they find personal salvation but have difficulty in getting away from the human limitations of the Divine Person. In the brief time that is allowed, let us consider with renewed thoughtfulness the principal meanings, haps the distinctive meanings, of these three words, rist, Jesus and Lord.



I. CHRIST

n the new revision of the American version of the le many of the different words for God will not ear. How many people wonder why we should e so many different words to convey to us the idea God over all: Jehovah, God, the Lord, the Lord d, Almighty, Eternal; and for Jesus, Christ, Jesus, Lord, the Wonderful, the Master, Teacher, the ior, etc.

As we look at this word Christ we observe that it is n the Greek and means anointed, that the similar rd in the Hebrew is Messiah, which also means inted. Of course, the words Christ, Jesus and Lord used by all of us synonymously and properly so. surely the words have distinctive meanings or they uld not be employed.

Often in our English language it is difficult for peo- to understand each other with that certain rapport understanding which we all covet, and the diffi- y lies in the fact that often a word may have as ny as twenty or thirty facets of meaning. Lacking exact word to convey with nicety and precision at we mean, we use a word that may be interpreted our dearest friend in a way somewhat differently n what we intend.

First of all, let me stress the fact that we worship God, not three or more. God is one and only one. e best explanation of the meaning of the Trinity in ns of down-to-earth living that I have ever found his:

God the Creator is God the Father;

God the Son is God the Father revealed;

God the Holy Spirit is God the Father in the process of revealing.

Second, there is no doubt that the Bible has much to say about the person of God's Son before the incarnation. As one writer has said: "The mission of Christ was not like that of other men, who are born into the world and grow up to find out what they were born for. When he came hither he came forth from God. His mission was that of one who was with the Father, God, before his birth, and came into the world in order to accomplish a work already conceived and prepared for him. One needs to read and appraise the meaning of passages of scripture like the following: 'If God were your Father, you would have loved me, for I came out from God, and now am here; and I have not come of myself, but he sent me as his Messenger.' "

Again, Jesus said: "In truth I tell you, before Abraham existed I was."

And again: "He who believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. I have come as a Light into the world that no one who believes in me should remain in darkness. When anyone hears my teaching and pays no heed to it, I am not his judge; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects me, and disregards my teaching, has a judge already—the very Message which I have delivered will itself be his judge at the Last Day, For I have not delivered it on my own authority; but the Father, who sent me, has himself given me his command as to what I should say, and what message I should deliver. And I know that Immortal Life lies in keeping his command. Therefore, whatsoever I say, I say only what the Father has taught me." (From the Twentieth Century version.)

Still again, we read in John 16:38: "I came out from the Father, and have come into the world; and now I am to leave the world, and go to the Father."

In that prayer of Jesus, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, we read: "I have honored thee on earth by completing the work which thou hast given me to do; and now do thou honor me, Father, at thy side with the honor which I had at thy side before the world began."

In John 17:24, we read: ". . . for thou didst love me before the beginning of the world."

You will recall the very familiar words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men." That was the Christ, the Son of God, the very Mind

in creation, the creative agent, that invisible, intangible, eternal Spirit.

The epistles of Paul were written before the Gospel of John and the idea of Christ as existent before Jesus was born is emphasized. Look at Philippians 2:5-11: "Let the spirit of Christ Jesus be yours also. Though the divine nature was his from the beginning, yet he did not look upon equality with God as above all things to be clung to, but impoverished himself by taking the nature of a servant and becoming like men; he appeared among us as a man, still further humbled himself by submitting even to death—to death on a cross! And that is why God raised him to the very highest place, and gave him the Name which stands above all other names, so that in adoration of the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In the letter to the Colossians we have another very clear statement of this profound truth: "For Christ is the very incarnation of the invisible God—First-born and Head of all creation; for in him was created all that is in Heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible—Angels, and Archangels and all the Powers of Heaven. All has been created through him and for him and he is the Head of the Church, which is his Body."

In the letter to the Hebrews we read: "that it was through Christ, his Son, he made the universe. For he is the radiance of the glory of God and the very expression of his Being, upholding all creation by the power of his word." As the King James version puts it, "In him all things cohere."

It is clear, therefore, that the Holy Bible supports and positively teaches us that the person Christ existed before Jesus was born. It would be clarifying, I believe, if when we use the word Christ either by speaking it, hearing it, writing it, or reading it (unless the context should suggest another meaning) we should do well to think of the Eternal Mind, the Creative Mind, the Controlling Mind, the Revealing Mind of creation, in other words of God himself, for the Word was not only with God but was God.

But how can the eternal, invisible, intangible, inaudible Christ become vocal, manifest to us? This is where Jesus comes in to save us by giving us this supreme revelation.

II. JESUS

As the word Christ, in so many passages of our Bible, indicates the Mind of God, the Plan of God, the Purpose of God, in other words, as John says, the Logos, or the Word, so the word Jesus is definitely the name of a man. Other words which mean exactly the same thing are Joshua, Jeshua and Jesu.

Jesus indicates the human being. Jesus was temporal, though the Christ in him is eternal. Jesus was limited, though the Christ he declared to the world is unlimited, except by himself. Jesus was limited geographically; he could not be in two places at the same time, though the Christ, the Mind of God, is immediately present to every man everywhere, and at a time.

In other words, Jesus, born of Mary, was the inc nation, the declaration, the revelation of the invisi Christ who existed before Jesus was born in manger. God literally came down to earth by becomi human in manifestation. Jesus was the focus of div light for man. Jesus was the human megaphone for voice of God. As John said, Jesus came to declare G the Father.

It is a marvelous conception that the eternal G should be revealed in a visible man; that a spirit God should be revealed through a body of flesh a blood. Surely God was in the flesh and dwelt amc us and men beheld his glory, the glory—or glowing as of the only begotten of the Father.

To have such a revelation, such a declaration, su a transmission in terms of language that all men eve where understand, namely, human behavior, is one the most heartening conceptions this sinful and sinni world could have.

III. LORD

Christ Jesus the Lord. How does the eternal G as revealed in the human being Jesus, become the L of men? He becomes Lord when his mind is accept when his will is accepted, when his purpose is accep as man's own. When God as revealed in Jesus comes regnant in a man's life, he becomes Lord.

Very clearly, he is only partially regnant in the li of most Christians I know, whether Greek, Rom Protestant or non-Protestant evangelicals. Unless a until the eternal God, the creator and controller creation, as revealed in terms of human life becor ruler over a man's intellect, social life, business li domestic life, personal life, he cannot become Lo But if and when and as he is recognized and ackno edged as Master of one's heart and soul and behav he does actually become Lord, even in this hard, co realistic world.

What a thrilling spiritual experience to accept reign! One feels like joining in that exultant clamation of the Apostle Paul, "Thanks be unto G for his unspeakable gift!" What was his unspeaka gift? It was the gift of himself in and revea through Jesus.

Thus the individual man becomes a unit in Kingdom of God. He becomes a citizen of the sp itual kingdom. He accepts the reign of the King Kings and the Lord of Lords, for many an earth king and queen and many an earthly lord have accep and rejoiced in the reign of God the Eternal in th own hearts and lives.

Having him so close, always immediately present every man, with no need of an intermediary, we n appreciate the insight of these lines by Ethel Ro Fuller:

If radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody
From night—and toss it over a continent or sea;
If the petaled white notes of a violin
Are blown across the mountains or the city's din;

songs, like crimson roses, are culled from thin blue air—
hy should mortals wonder if God hears prayer?

he important question for every person is whether ot he will admit and acknowledge his origin, God, his highest destiny, which is with God. If not, he lost soul. If he will, he is a saved soul. The word ation means the same thing as health in its broad- meaning. He is healthy spiritually who acknowl- s the regnancy of God as revealed in Jesus in his if he permits anything else to master him, even own little constellation of ideas to which he com- himself, he is a sick man, unhealthy, unsaved. us join the legions who believe in God as revealed esus and thus have an experience of a vital, ener- g, electrifying relationship with Christ Jesus as d.

hen we can join with Gilder as he sang:

If Jesus Christ is a man—
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him
And to him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a god—
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!

uch submission leads to the highest self-realization. low can it be that there are so many Athenians in erica and in other parts of the world? By this I n, why are there so many people who have every they can think of but fail to recognize the one only God and Savior? To so many the God whom so sorely need is the Unknown God.

ou remember what Paul said about the relation- s of these Athenians who were so terribly religious knew not the God of life at all. He said to them the one God they left out, the God to them un- wn, was the God "in whom they lived and moved had their being." One would think that with all know or may know by reading such books as Sir es Jeans' *The Universe Around Us* or J. Arthur mson's *A System of Animate Nature* or Edding- s books or the statements of Arthur Compton or likan or Michaelson or Pupin and countless others are our recognized leaders in the natural sciences say it would appear that with all these authorities ing their confidence in God, the ultimate, basic and nary reality of spirit rather than matter, we should be so much like the Athenians and worship our e systems of values, and be so religious when we k we are having nothing to do with religion, but being Christian at all because we do not recognize source of our lives. As if one were to deny his ntage on the one hand and on the other fail to nowledge his highest destiny, which John Milton was "to regain to know God."

et many go on—intelligent men, professional men, tors, lawyers, editors, scientists, women of high in- ctual attainments and with mental acumen—they n disregarding their spiritual origin and their high- est possible ultimate destiny by living in terms of their own little, petty systems of values and bowing down before them daily, even if they amount to no more than being bored with time and call for life being a series of rounds of one thing after another to keep attention from going to sleep.

But no normal person can live without religion. Make no mistake about it. Every person with normal mentality has some kind of religion, just as he has some kind of education. He cannot evade it; he cannot avoid it; he cannot avert it; he cannot escape it. Every person is like the Athenians in Paul's day—and since, for that matter: he is very religious. To be religious is to be committed to values of some sort, low or high, unworthy or worthy. But, alas, many are committed to the wrong thing, the wrong set of values, the wrong ideals. These are not high enough and do not have power enough in them to give one the lift that God would give every man who will be a true anthropos and look up.

Suppose professional men, editors, teachers, political leaders, business men were to acknowledge humbly that all they know is so little compared with what they might know and smaller still when contrasted with what they do not know and what may be known ultimately; suppose they were to acknowledge in their hearts the Eternal One, accept him as he gives them the light, as regnant in their lives—study the life, the behavior, the decisions, the crises, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, as the manifestation of that Eternal One in the language of human life—what a change it would make in hearts, homes, houses of business and of professions! What a change in making great decisions, whether personal or international! May God give men light and lead them to accept his reign rather than continue being governed by their own self-projected set of values, whatever they may be.

Derzhavin cries from his soul:

O Thou Eternal One! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motions guide;
Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight;
Thou only God! There is no God beside!
O Being of all beings! Mighty One!
Whom none could comprehend and none explore;
Who fillest existence with Thyself alone:
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er—
Being whom we call God, and know no more!
(Translated by Sir John Bowring)

Indeed we should know no more, had it not been for Jesus, the one in whom Thou didst reveal thyself to men. O God, Thou Eternal One manifested in the flesh, be unto us the light in the darkness, the life amidst death, the salvation of our souls.

The soul of man is competent in God's presence. Hear Tennyson sing:

For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?

And Robert Browning seems to answer:

He dwells in all,
From life's minute beginnings, up at last
To man—the consummation of this scheme
Of being, the completion of this sphere of life . . .
And man produced, all has its end thus far;
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency toward God.

And we all pray:

Draw Thou my soul, O Christ,
Closer to Thine;
Breathe into every wish
Thy will divine!

Raise my low self above,
Won by Thy deathless love;
Ever, O Christ, through mine
Let Thy life shine.

Lead forth my soul, O Christ,
One with Thine own,
Joyful to follow Thee
Through paths unknown!

In Thee my strength renew;
Give me my work to do!
Through me Thy truth be shown,
Thy love made known.

THE Christian religion is the only religion that sees man as he is, realistically. It peers down into the dark abyss, and then stares up at the sun-kissed heights. That is what we are, from top to bottom, and we had better be concerned about it. It's our business, and our neighbor's business. It's the whole world's business at the moment! No other explanation of human nature will ever fit the facts. When we have any other, history goes haywire.

PAUL E. SCHERER.

ONE of the soundest truths that the war has impressed upon us is the importance of religion. High-ranking military officers all agree that the influence of the churches upon men and women in the services is immeasurable. Religion should begin with the young. Those who learn its lesson as children are imbued with a message that they should be able to carry in their hearts throughout their lives. It is proper and vital, therefore, that we encourage by every means attendance at Sunday school.

THOMAS E. DEWEY.

SUNDAY is nature's law as well as God's. No individual or nation habitually disregarding it has failed to fall upon disaster and grief.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

WE do not need more intellectual power; we need more spiritual power. We do not need more knowledge; we need more character. We do not need more law; we need more religion.

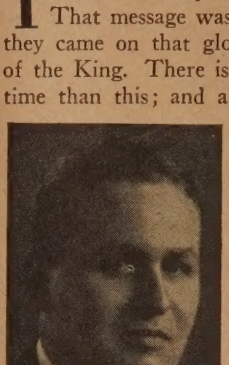
CALVIN COOLIDGE.

The Christmas Messag

BY LYNN HOUGH CORSON

For unto you is born this day . . . a Savior. L 2:11.

THERE is only one message at Christmas ti That message was proclaimed by the angels w they came on that glorious night to herald the b of the King. There is no other message at Christ time than this; and all the mighty, tender drama



Christmas, the pageantry color, bears but this sig cance: "For unto you is b this day . . . a Savior."

As we go back across years and relive that anc scene, we find in every elen of the scene but the reitera of that message. The an were proclaiming it from hea as though all the shining h around the great white thr were rejoicing that there come at last, after ages of ning and wandering and doubt and desperation, means of men's redemption. There had come at l last to the dark world—a Savior!

WHEN GOD WAS LONELY

Just suppose you had been God! Suppose tha one mighty act of creative love you had molded universe and made man in your own image. Try think what would have happened in your heart if had gone through those creative processes so beautif described by James Weldon Johnson in his poem "" Creation." He pictures God at work making his w and finding, when he was finished, that he was lo in the midst of the splendor he had made.

Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, "I'll make me a man!"

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty,
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His ha
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in His own image;
Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.

Just suppose you had done that, and then after

sage of time had seen what you had so hopefully
ioned, distorted out of all recognition of its for-
glory. Suppose you had been God and looked
n on the work you had made with your own
ds. Would not love have prompted you in one
t act of sacrificial self-giving to seek to efface the
ks which sin and the world's slow stain had
ared upon that "living soul" you had made in your
image? Is it any wonder then that, when in the
ness of time God sent his Son into the world to re-
m the world, the very angels in heaven should
lare a day of rejoicing and sing in full-throated
mony, "For unto you is born this day a Savior"?

WHEN NATURE SANG FOR JOY

s there any wonder that the star shone over that
hlehem manger witnessing to this same message? It
a true instinct that made the psalmist picture the
e hills leaping together like lambs, and the author
he book of Job recall the time when the morning
s sang together and all the sons of God shouted
joy. They were not far wrong when they tried to
cate that the natural order is subservient to that
itual world which is the dominant force in the
verse. It is no wonder then that at the birth of
Savior a great star shone brighter than the rest
its cascading beams of light seemed to say: "For
o you is born this day a Savior."

Those wise men who wrote in the New Testament
record of their faith in the Son of God did not
when they said that Jesus has dominion over the
ls of men; in a daring venture of faith they de-
ed that Jesus has dominion over all of creation.
d the record in the first chapter of John: "In the
inning was the Word, and the Word was with
d, and the Word was God. The same was in the
inning with God. All things were made by him
without him was not anything made that was
le." Read in the letters of St. Paul how time and
in the apostle breaks out in a kind of paean of
ise over the creative mastery of Jesus Christ of all
ngs in heaven and in earth. It is no wonder then
t on that first Christmas, when Jesus was born,
tar shone brightly as a kind of a symbol that the
erial world finds its ultimate meaning in the world
he spirit.

WHAT ABOUT SCIENCE?

We are living in a time when our preoccupation
h the material world through scientific investiga-
and research has placed in our hands power which
ur spiritual immaturity we seem incapable of using
our good. If St. Paul were alive today he would
m all the findings of the sciences for Christ; he
ld say that all this power belongs to him. All that
sics reveals, all that chemistry discovers, all the find-
s of the scientists in any field—all belong to Christ!
is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the
ven-sent Savior who alone gives us the spiritual
acity to deal adequately with the material world.
d so to man's ceaseless search for the conquest of
nature there comes the witnessing star: "There is born to you this day a Savior."

And the shepherds, too, affirm that truth. They were humble men, wise in the ways of nature. They probably would be rated by us as illiterate or ignorant but they were wise enough to hear the voice of God when he spoke, and there is no true wisdom apart from that. When God spoke through his angels that night, the shepherds instinctively felt that the glad message of redemption was for them; that common men all over the earth had a stake in what was being proclaimed that night; that the Christ who came to birth was bringing his redemptive force to bear in the regeneration of human life at whatever level; that the Savior came to touch into divine awareness the simple, kindly, humble people of the world. It is no wonder then that the angels sang to the shepherds: "For unto you is born this day a Savior."

A GARDENER FOR MEN!

The author of *Wind, Sand and Stars* tells of a trip he took by train from the Ruhr Valley over into Poland. Some Polish miners and their families were being repatriated and he walked through the cars as they were sleeping. He stopped by the seat where a father and mother and little boy were sleeping. He writes of his thoughts as he looked at them: "A golden fruit had been born of two peasants. I bent over the smooth brow, over those mildly pouting lips, and I said to myself: This is a musician's face. This is a child Mozart. This is a life full of beautiful promise. Protected, sheltered, cultivated, what could not this child become? When by mutation a new rose is born in a garden, all the gardeners rejoice. They isolate the rose, tend it, foster it. *But there is no gardener for men!* This little Mozart will be shaped like the rest by the common stamping machine. This little Mozart will love shoddy music in the stench of night dives. This little Mozart is condemned. What torments me tonight is the gardener's point of view—it is the sight, a little bit in all men, of Mozart murdered."

But there is a Gardener for men! That is what the angels were singing about when above the shepherds' fields they chorused: "For unto you is born this day a Savior."

The message came to the wise men, too. They were earnest seekers after truth. They were those who would not be content until they found the truth, realizing that only as they found the truth were they free. And so they came in a true act of wisdom and laid their treasures at the Christ Child's feet. True wisdom always makes obeisance to Christ. True wisdom always needs to find a Savior. People can be clever and intelligent, but they are wise only as they dedicate their cleverness and their intelligence to great spiritual ends.

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE—AND CHRIST

I was interested in the unconscious symbolism exemplified at a recent concert presented in our high school. Behind the chorus choir was a back-drop and on that

back-drop was painted the scene of the wise men coming with their gifts to Jesus. It was a dramatization of the truth that there is no true intellectual life unless it is found at the feet of the Savior. Would that we might realize that the richest gifts of the mind belong to him and that the intellectual quest has no meaning unless it finds its meaning at Bethlehem!

NO TRUE FAMILY WITHOUT CHRIST

Paul Elmer More, one of the brilliant minds of our generation and one who himself made the spiritual journey to Bethlehem, wrote of the Incarnation: "Oh, I understand the stupendous paradox of such a belief—who better than I?—of the belief that God, the remote and awful mystery of the world, lived and spoke and endured as this Jesus lived and spoke and endured in the little corner of the earth called Galilee. I recite the creeds and wonder and doubt. And then I read in the Gospels, and out of some sentence or some act—out of some gesture or some glance of the eye I think it would have been had I been there to see—springs a flash of light, comes a sudden lifting of the curtain, which compels me to say: This thing is of man and more than man."

And Mary and Joseph were there. There is no true family until Christ is in the midst of it; no true family until in the midst of it shines the radiance of his love. It was so then and it is so now. Amid all the complexities of our modern world, the family has not changed in its importance and the Christian home is still the most important single unit in our society. And to the homes of the world the angels were proclaiming on that holy night: "For unto you is born this day a Savior."

We are appalled as we look out across the world and think of what is happening to the homes of the peoples of the world. In too many instances there is an evident lack of concern for these spiritual values which at last give assurance of the permanency of the things in which we believe. Many a home needs again to hear the angels proclaim this glad message.

Not only did the angels proclaim it, and the star witness to it, and the shepherds affirm it, and the wise men give proof of it, and the human family testify to the certainty of it, but God himself confirmed it! "For unto you is born this day a Savior."

REJOICE! A MESSAGE FOR TODAY

What mighty resurgence of hope there should be in our hearts when in this desperate hour we listen again to the angels' song! It is God saying to us that surely there shall come to pass the things proclaimed that night so long ago across the sleeping hills. We must not turn cynics and lose our faith in goodness. We must not reduce our idealism by compromise. We must not lay our love on the altars of the world's hate. We must be as those who commit themselves unfalteringly to the propagation of that great truth first proclaimed on that first Christmas morning. We must not allow war or the problems of peace or personal loss or personal tragedy or the sorrows of these times to dim for us the beauty, the promise, the hope that lies at the heart of that message: "For unto is born this day a Savior." As we look again into manger and into the bright radiance of the face of Child, we see there God's promise to a weary, he sick, broken world.

Among the many beautiful Christmas greetings came to our home last year there was one in ticular which caught my attention. On the front the card were two panels and on each panel there the picture of an angel with trumpet raised. On back of the card my friend had written just one w "Rejoice!" and signed his name. I would that e one of us would catch that spirit. Rejoice! the trumpets are still sounding, the angel choirs are singing—"For unto you is born this day . . . a Savi

'The Nazareth Plan'

By George G. Parker

MEN today are expressing their hopes for a ter world tomorrow in terms of great con ences and great plans. So recent months have marked by such names as Dumbarton Oaks, Bret Woods, Yalta and San Francisco. In the midst this day of planning, we Ch tians ought to be giving seri study and consideration to "Nazareth Plan." But w is the "Nazareth Plan"? is the master plan upon wh all these other plans must pend for their ultimate succ It is the Christian plan fo new order of life.

It is altogether possible we either did not know or forgotten that there ever such a plan. Generally, we h thought of Christianity as being impractical and w out any specific program for society. If that is case it will be interesting to recall the scripture les this morning telling how Jesus first returned to old home town of Nazareth after beginning his m istry. His home folks were exceedingly anxious hear about his plans and purposes for living. W he went to the synagogue he was immediately as to read, and turning to the prophecy of Isaiah he r a half-dozen sentences which set forth the Nazar Plan, clearly, definitely, specifically. He read: "T Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anoin me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach acceptable year of the Lord."

PREAMBLE TO THE 'PLAN'

Immediately we note that the Nazareth Plan i plan not just for a new world order but a new b

s order, not just a business but a family order, not t a family order but a personal order. It is a plan a new order of Christian living.

Now the Preamble to the Nazareth Plan is set th in this first sentence: "The Spirit of the Lord upon me, for he hath anointed me." Search them over, in no other plan for world order today do find a preamble or sentence like that. "The Spirit the Lord is upon me"—or better, the way a modern nslation puts it—"for he has consecrated me." It l all be reduced to that one word "consecration." lieve me, that makes the Nazareth Plan different m all the others. The Christian approaches his k, whether for a world order or family order or rsonal living, with a sense of consecration and dedi- ion. He humbly recognizes his own shortcomings, shortsighted plans; he sees about him the littered eckage resulting from so-called human wisdom; he ses his own narrow selfishness and so turns to the sdom of God for guidance and leadership. He s: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on th through me!" With humility, with consecration, th dedication, without which no plan in all the rld can succeed, the Nazareth Plan begins.

GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED TO THE POOR

Article I of the Nazareth Plan: "To preach the spel to the poor." If you were to set about paint- a series of great paintings of murals telling the ry of 1945 you might well select these six articles the Nazareth Plan as the subjects of your paint- s. You would have included the whole of modern e and its problems. That's how modern the Naza- h Plan is. It is as modern as the national collec- n of clothing for the naked and the homeless. "To each the gospel to the poor." Jesus was always con- rned for the poor. He was one of them. "The n of man hath not even a place to lay his head." he poor are still with us across the face of the earth. one man with relatives in Europe said recently, The middle class in Europe is gone now; wiped t." Only the poor remain—the homeless and the ngry. The Nazareth Plan has in deep compassion ways called for help for the poor. When the Chris- n church becomes so concerned with itself, with its n inner affairs, that it forgets the poor and needy, en it is no longer Christian. Let us haul down its g. It is no longer worthy of the Christ who of ep loving compassion gave himself for others. Its art has ceased to beat. It is dead.

But when Jesus set forth the Nazareth Plan he is not so shortsighted as to have been talking simply out poor clothes, poor homes, poor food. He was ing what none of our modern plans have done. e was talking about the spiritual causes of economic verty. He was concerned with poverty of spirit. hat is why we are economically poor, that is why e have social turmoil—because such a great percent- e of people everywhere—even in beautiful homes— e spiritually in rags and tatters, hungry, starving, ing, dead spiritually. They tried to live by bread one; now they do not have the bread. They tried, even though in the form of humans, to live as sub-humans. They tried in this world of God's moral and spiritual laws to live by their own laws of the jungle, growling and fighting over the bones of material things, and they couldn't get by with it. Born to live as children of God they tried to live as spiritual orphans.

The Nazareth Plan begins with this fundamental principle: the spiritual causes of economic and social trouble and the great need in any new order of learning to live as spiritual beings, as children of God.

'TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED'

Article II of the Nazareth Plan: "To heal the brokenhearted." Any set of paintings depicting 1945 would, alas, include one with this title: "The Brokenhearted." They are everywhere, even exceeding the number of the poor.

In the midst of one of his most dramatic speeches, Winston Churchill suddenly stopped and as if in a lonely soliloquy said slowly, "We have lived through the age of the greatest weight of sorrow and suffering in all the history of mankind." And then, remembering that he was still in the House of Commons, he pulled himself back to his task of reporting on the military successes of the armies.

There has apparently been no time or space for this article in any of the other plans for a new world order of life—to heal the brokenhearted. But deepest of all the deep needs of men and women today is a faith that can meet and conquer sorrow and suffering and heal the weight of heartbreak that covers the face of the earth with tears mixed with blood.

But behind these words for the brokenhearted is a still more significant fact about the Nazareth Plan. It is no mere calm and cold blueprint of the new world with great world states. It starts at the very opposite end—it begins with compassionate consideration for individual men and women.

We cannot exaggerate the significance of this fact. Many of the plans for a new world are beautiful theories. They look well on paper. They would work well if people's hearts were changed and if people were taught to want these new plans. That is left out by all the planners—all except the author of the Nazareth Plan. His first thought is for the hearts of individual people. They are the foundation from which the new order of life arises. A personal order first, a home order, a business order, a national order and then a world order.

'DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES'

Article III of the Nazareth Plan: "To preach deliverance to the captives." You have already seen this picture. Some time ago I saw a photograph of a few of the three million men of France returning from captivity—clogging the roads; and they rushed home again—home again. It's a never-to-be-forgotten sight —people over the whole earth being delivered from captivity. That's how modern the Nazareth Plan is. It says, "To preach deliverance to the captives." Now make no mistake about it. We are suffering under

no delusion that words can clip barbed wire fences, or sermons tear down walls of stone, or speeches unlock cells.

But what is the real captivity of our time—the captivity and enslavement which has taken almost all men in and produced this age of stockades and concentration camps? It is the enslavement of the false and vicious creeds which have been rampant in our day—the fascist and the nazi, the rise of vicious nationalism, horrible racialism—the doctrines of the "master people." In the end it is only the Nazareth Plan which can deliver us from these captivities. It meets nationalism with the doctrine of the brotherhood of men. It reveals the lie of racialism with the words, "God has made of one blood all nations." It challenges the master people with the formula that true greatness is in the humble service of one another. It brings this new order first of all in the relationships of homes and families and neighborhoods and then out across the face of the earth.

'RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND'

Article IV of the Nazareth Plan: "The recovery of sight to the blind." Our books and magazines are filled with pictures which abundantly illustrate this article—pictures of men blinded on the battlefields learning to walk and work and play; stories of the new "eye bank" with tissue for damaged eyes.

How very simple it would be, if the blindness with which this article in the Nazareth Plan is concerned could be healed as easily as some of our physical blindness. But Jesus' real business was with spiritual blindness. So is ours today in bringing the Nazareth Plan to bear upon modern life. Men have been blinded by hate, poisoned until they could no longer see aright. But even more, they have been blinded to the fundamental fact of our world—its interrelatedness, the interconnection of all peoples everywhere, and the fact that we rise and fall together—never separately. The Nazareth Plan was concerned with that long ago and one of its commentators said, "We are members one of another." It is only with that realization that we have our eyes opened to walk and live in this world. It was a significant word that the president of one of our great scientific companies said a while ago: "We have passed into an era where we are more dependent upon each other than ever before—an era in which none of us can live comfortably or securely unless all do so—an era in which therefore there is no essential conflict between selfishness and altruism. We are beginning to realize that from a most practical point of view we are our brothers' keepers."

LIBERTY FOR THE BRUISED

Article V of the Nazareth Plan: "To set at liberty them that are bruised." A modern translation puts it better: "To give freedom to the oppressed." How can we picture that? Men dying on battlefields, men flying through the skies, guerillas blowing up a bridge, conferences on ships on the high seas and in far-away lands and on the islands—all of them fighting and working for freedom. It's the magic word of modernity. Freedom! "To give freedom to the oppresse

But the Nazareth Plan goes far deeper than "four freedoms." It underlies and preserves all fr dom. For freedom is magnificent, but a highly peri able state of living. Those who are to live by th freedom must know what to do with it. Freedom not a vacuum. And, by and large, when men ha lost their freedom it has been because they have u it so badly. The Nazareth Plan in giving freedom d not simply preach it as if it were an unalloyed blessi but it also gives men the aims and moral princip to guide their freedom and the sense that it is a tru Freedom can be used rightly only when accepted something God has loaned us to be used wisely a well.

'THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD'

Article VI of the Nazareth Plan: "To procla the acceptable year of the Lord." No, there is modern picture of this. In the days of Jesus th was a practice among the people of Palestine t every seven years all debts would be forgiven, a all grudges forgotten as they started anew. Jesus v evidently referring to that custom in this article. some ways that is what we are praying for now- time of beginning over again in our world, an atten at starting at the bottom to build again. And t beginning again can come only if we begin with Chr He is the first and the last. He is the beginning a end. The hope of men for a new order is with Nazareth Plan of the Nazareth Man.

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> For he hath anointed me
> To preach the gospel to the poor,
> He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
> To preach deliverance to the captives,
> And the recovering of sight to the blind;
> To set at liberty them that are bruised;
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

This is the gospel! It is still the best news in the world, and our chief duty now is to procla that gospel in whatever way we can—with our and with our hearts and with our lives.

THE GOSPEL of Christ demands respect for ev human being. No race, no people, no social sphere, man is outside the love of God. Thus each hum being has a dignity, and any attack against this c nity can never be passed over in silence by the church . . . Christ alone is the judge of faithfulness, and faithfulness of the church.

MARC BOEGNER

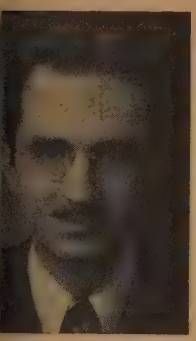
YOU can trust the truth. It will not let you dow The principle of the hypotenuse holds up no mat what the politicians do. The atoms are not influen by plebiscites. Ether waves do not read the newspap The laws of nature are uninfluenced by tides of pub opinion. This means, of course, that if a thing right, it is safe; if anything has the endorsement God, it will not fail.

ROY L. SMITH

Take a Long Look at Life

By William H. Hudnut, Jr.

OU may have read about the man who risked his life to render harmless a time bomb that had fallen ır St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Imagine yourself the same situation and ask yourself whether you uld have had the same courage. To walk calmly up to so sinister an agent of death as that and quietly set to work on it requires a stoutness of heart which few possess. The man was a hero. How disappointing, then, to read that later he was arrested for looting in the very district where he had hazarded his life!



This is the kind of thing, however, that continually happens to people who live on a day-to-day basis: one time they are heroes, the next time criminals; in one set of circumnces they appear to be saints, in another sinners. If opportunity for life-saving comes along they may ept it; if an opportunity for stealing appears, they y accept that. There is nothing predictable or dedable about them, for they have no philosophy of to which they are loyal and no long-term values it regulate their short-term conduct. No one can tell advance which road they will follow because no one ows, and they themselves do not know, which road y are on. Perhaps they are not even aware of the ds; they just go along on the impulse of the mont, living from day to day.

Such an attitude toward life is foolish enough in ce, but in wartime it is tragic; for in war all the sions of living are so greatly increased and the stakes enlarged that we need to be doubly sure where we going if we are not to be thrown off the track. allow idealism and the sentimental belief that we ll somehow muddle through are bad enough in y of prosperity, but in the day of adversity they are dmissible. Yet countless thousands of supposedly ristian people today continue to live scattered and fish lives, without perspective and devoid of power. ey do not know the sustaining courage and the ding comfort that come from taking a long look at and holding fast to great ideals.

Perhaps the author of Ecclesiastes had something like s in mind when he wrote that difficult saying, "Better the end of a thing than its beginning." He had only look about him to see that quite the reverse was true. ings began much better than they ended: his horse s strong and useful when it was young, ugly and rthless when it was old; his new house was fine for few years but soon became dirty and unattractive; a r would begin auspiciously for Israel only to end invariably in his nation's defeat. Surely beginnings were better than endings! Yet in the face of all this evidence, Koheleth nonetheless clung to his faith in the long look, and for all his worldliness and cynicism stoutly affirmed that the end of a matter was better than the beginning. He was not stating a fact so much as an insight; he believed in the long run.

I

The first observation that comes to our minds as we think about the need for perspective in life is that it never is enough merely to begin well. Almost anyone can do that. "Anybody can write a good first act," said Arnold Bennett. Plenty of plays are fine, really quite entertaining, until about two-thirds of the way through when, because they have no real purpose, they "end like a broom in a multitude of straws instead of like a sword in point and power." That was true of "Claudia," a play on Broadway a short while ago and lately made into a motion picture, which the reviewer described as "a first-class comedy that turned into a fairly routine problem play in the last act." What a commentary on life! So many of us start out in first-class fashion only to turn into routine problems before we know it. Repeatedly one sees the tragedy of the brilliant beginning—the person who, full of enthusiasm and skill, has started out to make a real contribution, only to end in failure because his life lacks inner strength and the power to endure. "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning."

As a minister, I know at least this much about preaching, that we need to beware of preaching that courts immediate success at the cost of permanent significance. Almost any man can begin a sermon well, but as the minutes follow in stately succession sleep will gently fall upon the pews if the sermon has no real purpose. Almost any man can have two or three good sermons to his credit, but to go on preaching effectively to the same people year after year, so that some of your best friends have heard you speak many hundred times, requires a thorough gospel, not just a flashy beginning. It is a great thing when a preacher can face the same congregation Sunday after Sunday and still see the people in it grow spiritually, not fed on a purely contemporaneous diet of arresting tidbits served up to please the parish palate, but on the deep and abiding truths of Christian experience that will not have to be withdrawn or explained away five years from now but that are good yesterday, today and forever. I know a man who did that for thirty-eight years in the same pulpit, and it took more than a good beginning; it took a high purpose too, and a sustaining faith, and the power to see it through. Better is the end of a pastorate than its beginning.

We cannot always see the precise nature of the end, to be sure, but wisdom dictates making our plans with reference to their outcome and permanence. Choose what you can spend your life doing! I know of no better advice to give young people on the threshold of their careers than that. The wise person tries to see his life as a whole, and to choose what will be sound in the long run, what he will not have to regret or apologize

for, or be able to attain too quickly and easily. This long look is needed to validate any good beginning. Millions of our fellow human beings all over the world today, for instance, have been overtaken by one or another of the horrible disasters of war. Their life was flowing smoothly along its accustomed course when suddenly their father was arrested, their lover killed, their home and shop wrecked, their child starved, their town bombed or occupied, or they themselves were tortured in a concentration camp. Under such circumstances a fair start was not enough; they had to have an unfaltering faith in an unfailing God, a sustaining vision that would enable them to endure all that oppression might do to them and still to triumph.

These days cry aloud for that kind of character, the kind that perseveres unto the end, holding fast to the eternal verities no matter what happens to you as an individual. If death be your lot, greet it with a cheer; if physical life be yours yet a little longer, use it to the full for Christ! Your life counts when it points, points to something beyond itself, greater and better and higher than itself. An ennobling purpose and the power to express it are prize possessions of the soul; they are what really bring lasting satisfaction in life, and enable one to say truly that the end is better than the beginning.

II

The second fact we notice as we examine our need for perspective in life is that the end is better only if growth accompanies the process. The end of physical things is not better than their beginning because there is no spiritual development involved, and they inevitably deteriorate: the car finds its sure way to the junk heap; the hand of time leans with relentless pressure on the firmest buildings; even our bodies lose that first fine careless rapture of youth, and as aches accumulate and muscles weaken we become conscious of the fact that physically speaking we are not the perfect specimens we used to be. As Tennyson's Ulysses said:

> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven.

In the physical realm it does seem true that beginnings are usually better than endings. But in the spiritual realm, ah, how different there! There is no limit to the values that a beautiful home may develop, for as two people who love each other more than anyone else in the world grow ever closer together and walk down the long corridor of the years with increasing love and respect, their family life broadens in its influence and deepens in richness and power. The end of their home life is better than its beginning because time, which causes some things to decay and deteriorate, only adds significance and depth to a growing relationship like that. "Love never faileth!" Better is the end of a family rooted and grounded in love than its beginning, for such a family goes up to the gates of death loyal and loving to one another.

Likewise, there is no limit to the values that the human family may develop. Its present difficulties need not breed despair, despite the hate and bitterness on every side. Life will not always be thus, and as men endure and hold fast to what they know is right, t will triumph in the end, for the values created by l never disappear, and death is swallowed up in victo That is our faith, and that is the only assurance times like these.

Look at that lonely table in an upper room so m years ago in Palestine, with eleven depressed men g ered around it and One who was washing their f Surely here was an inglorious ending! But think of values that love and a passion for truth had created and through that life, values that have changed the f of the earth and will yet redeem mankind. How g ious the end even though on a cross, and like so m apparent endings not an end at all but only a r beginning, a gateway to larger life!

All of this is not, of course, to disparage the imp tance of beginnings. "Not begun is never done," is aphorism that many need to take to heart. Fine p poses do not guarantee fine conduct. But in the lar sense a worthy purpose does promote growth, does m much more likely the selection of worthy means, d tend to insure a better life. Religion is concerned w the means of grace, to be sure, but first of all it is c cerned with ultimates. If it had but one question to it would be not "What are you going to *do* tom row?" but "What are you going to *be* after a decad A high purpose will take care of a thousand tomorro if the end is right the means are much more likely be right too. The end of a matter is vastly more imp tant than its beginning if there has been true gro along the way.

III

One other significant aspect of our truth is this: haps the best way to gain perspective is to decide on purpose before we make our plans. Take a long l at life! Unless we do this whatever beginning we m will have very limited significance. Recently my bro and I went into one of those obscure but fascina little shops in New York which still retain someth of an Old World atmosphere. There we purchase chess set, and the proprietor very graciously offere play a game with each of us. A man stood by who apparently an expert, and we asked him to give us s advice. What he said was interesting: "Remember chess is so complicated that no human mind can g all the possible moves of thirty-two pieces, so in le ing it practice with a few. Start at the end of the g and work back."

How true that is of life: "Start at the end!" W do you want to be ten, twenty, thirty years from n What do you want to be, what do you want to rem ber, how do you want to be thinking, then? This h for anyone, old or young; for even though one is d he will still be very much alive. Life is too complic for the human mind to grasp all its possibilities start at the end; begin where you want to be when have finished; cultivate the Christian simplificatio life in terms of high purpose; see yourself in the p pective of the years, in the light of God's eternity, live so that you can some day honestly say with P "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." ter is the end of a thing than its beginning if

ɔse your purpose before you formulate your plans. ʻou have a child, let us say: Start at the end! What l of man or woman do you want that child to be? If the spiritual growth is allowed to be haphard and the moral development taken for granted, s so often the case, a grand beginning may end up poorly. Behind the intelligent handling of any d there is always a high purpose.

ʻou have a church: Start at the end! What do you ıt your church to be, what do you want it to accomh, what do you want it to stand for? Are you helpit to avoid mediocrity, to become the tremendous e for righteousness, for plain living and high thinkin your community that it should be? Unless it ws it has already begun to die. When the members ı church are plainly aware of its purpose and think structively in terms of its goal, seeing beyond the sh limits to their part in the world-wide Christian rprise, that church will generate spiritual power.

ʻou have a war, and it makes little sense unless you t at the end. Should we in the democracies so far get the purposes for which we have been fighting as ield to blind fury and sell out to hate, the whole cess would be vitiated and the war in the winning ıld be lost. We must keep our vision clear!

Alfred Austin, poet laureate of England some thirty rs ago, said that his idea of heaven was to sit in a den receiving one telegram after another, alternately ouncing a British victory by land and a British vic- by sea. Unless the United Nations have a concepı of the late war which transcends that, the chances ighteous and lasting peace are small. We must start he end, know what we have been fighting for, decide the kind of world we want, and then employ the ıns compatible with its achievement. We may be nkful that official groups here and in Britain have n established to devote their entire time to studying problems involved in the creation of a just and able peace. And create it we must, for in no other can we transform the most centrifugal decade in nan history into a centripetal civilization that will peratively seek the good of all and rally to God's ıdard of brotherhood.

The church's job in this crisis is to keep alive the itual conditions out of which, and only out of ich, a true peace can grow; for whether or not this been a righteous war will be decided by the peace ich is achieved. We can only validate the process by erence to its purpose. "Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal h thee?" saith the Lord. Yes, if we never forget t the end of this horrible war *must* be better than beginning.

And you have a self to live with, a character to cre-, a personality to build, a God-given life to develop; erever you are today, start at the end! Place your- in true perspective, gain God's point of view, and k at your whole life—what is past and what is to ne—in terms of his purpose for you. Start at the end l then work back. People are like vines, they never w as they should until they have found something rth while around which to climb and toward which to aspire. Every man needs an integrating purpose; no one really knows the meaning of life until he has faced the fact of death, and discovered something to live for that transcends the physical. None of us knows precisely how his life will turn out, but each of us can choose a cause, each of us can build his life around something great that will invest it with meaning and beauty. Better, far better, is the end of a life than its beginning if along the way a man keeps Christ in plain sight and lives according to God's will.

Nowhere, I think, did our Lord speak more directly to the needs of our particular time than in some of the verses in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. I am sure he had in mind the very need for perspective and perseverance about which we have been thinking this morning, and here is what he said about it:

> Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

That is the gospel of the Kingdom.

The science of life, man and society now enable us, if we will, to build a human utopia upon this earth. Where we go from here need no longer be a myth or legend. It is a challenge to human imagination and to social engineering. And it cannot be ignored. If we drift without planning, then, indeed, the human future will be a tragic voyage on an uncharted sea.

Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and left untried.

G. K. Chesterton.

Come, My Heart

COME, my heart, to Bethlehem. Follow the star through the night. Be not afraid to believe. See where He lies, the Truth which thou seekest, the Meaning of all thy weary striving. Behold, your King! Kneel before Him, who hast knelt before many false kings. Make room for Him at last, who hast sheltered the kings of hate and cruelty and greed. Here give thine adoration, who hast worshiped gods who gave thee no blessing. To Him give thy love, who hast been betrayed and wounded.

Kneel in humility, seeing that thy pride has brought only fear and pain. Surrender now, for He alone is unconquered and unconquerable. From thy wandering in barren wastes, come home to Bethlehem.

O my heart, thank God for His unspeakable gift! With all the choirs of heaven, sing Glory and Thanksgiving. Amen. Herman F. Reissig.

Were You There at Bethlehem, Too?

By Holland F. Burr

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem. Luke 2:15.

THE OTHER day I was watching the Christmas shoppers in one of the stores. There seemed to be a dead-in-earnestness about the way they went at it that cut the very heart out of the season. In desperate seriousness, struggling to leave no one off the Christmas list, they had squeezed all the joy out of the occasion, leaving nothing but a dry and slightly bitter rind to spoil their taste for any Christian holiday. I could see how their instincts of economy vie with their urge toward generosity. Dame Efficiency was domineering over the scene, with her stepdaughter, Shrewdness, by her side. Quietly through the store floated the strains of "Silent Night." The air was filled with music. The hard-pressed shoppers paused, listened, relaxed, and there in the aisles of the store I could see their faces transformed, lines of hardness giving way until their faces shone with the light that never was on land or sea. Their eyes, while the music held them, mirrored the mystery of Christmas.

It will be an ill day when music and poetry disappear from the world, when we become mere analysts of Things-As-They-Are, and never dwellers in the land of Things-As-They-Ought-To-Be. And here is a bit of poetry for our harassed today:

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

ONLY POETRY?

Some tell us that the birth stories are only poetry. But Jesus was born somewhere. His mother laid him in some cradle. And if the loving thoughts of the early Christians played upon the scene and invested it with an unearthly glory, it was only because of the glory they had witnessed with their own eyes as they came under the spell of this Master of men.

Moreover, the stories of the birth of Jesus possess one quality of all true literature: reading them, we ourselves become the persons in the tale. Again and again as I hear the Christmas story it comes over me: Why, this is I! and this is I! Do you never feel that you were at Bethlehem too? It is this personalness about the Christmas stories that gives them their never ending appeal.

I come with Mary and Joseph from their quiet country home in Nazareth as they journey down to Bethlehem. It was not easy traveling for Mary, but Rome had demanded that she must go. An order had gone out from Caesar that everyone must return to the home of his origin to be registered in the ce The rule of the strong is not easy on womanhood. even a forced journey may be fraught with destin think of the refugees of our day. Who knows decisive babies have been born in out-of-the-way pl babies upon whose shoulders the government shall and who shall lead the world, please God, into paths of peace? The hope of the world lies ever i heart of womanhood. For it is not to the strong b the loving that destiny belongs.

I re-enact in myself each stage and character o journey. I am Force—being cruel to the gentle an loving to gain my haughty ends. Or, haply, I Protector of the gentle—going, as Joseph did, b Mary to smooth the way and ease her load.

AN EYE FOR BUSINESS—NONE FOR LOVE

They come to Bethlehem and pause before the The innkeeper has an eye for business. It is the of the feast. Now he can make his gains. Now he choose his customers and entertain those who prestige. It is not the time to pay attention to a penter and his wife come down from the country.

How we do bow before names! Clothes make impression. We envy those who have possessions, gape before great houses. And when there is a ch at a few dollars, what a difference it makes! S iron for Japan, no matter if it is to be used against Chinese brothers—or stored in keeping for some enemy of the mikado's kingdom! Ha, ha! We our gains. What a difference a dollar makes! innkeeper rubs his hands.

Daily some chance comes knocking at my door abide by principle or to forego it, to do some kind without thought of pay or to take advantage leave my fellow "in the hole." The hope of the w knocks at my door, not once but every day, and me entertaining the wrong guests, absorbed in standards of greatness. That which will save world is come to me. That which will make n new creature is come to me. And I have no roo my already overburdened life. I am too busy. great things can stand outside and wait. There i room for the things that matter. There is no roo the inn for Christ.

Humbled, I follow to the stable. There amid common I see splendor. As I doff my pride haughtiness, there, in the lowly manger of my h the Christ is born.

No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in.

Christ's effective location today, so far as chan our time is concerned, is in you and me, in lo people. And the despair of the world is likewis you and me. Not armies or the accumulation of sessions will save us, but Christ when his spirit comes embodied in people like you and me. And Ch remember, knows no boundary lines. Among all cla races, nations can be found those in whom his s

been born, the friends of humanity and God. And ll places are those opposed to him, the enemies of anity and God.

ANGELS ATHWART THE DARKNESS

he scene shifts to the hills near Bethlehem where herds watch their flocks by night. There through stillness is heard an angel's voice in sweetest song laiming: "Good tidings of great joy which shall o all people. . . . Peace . . . Good will toward ."

ow in the cold world of Matter-of-Fact I have r seen angels any more than you have. But there poetry that bears witness to a greater fact. In its t I trust myself to angels every day. I know ething of God's nearness. I believe in the listening —to hear what he has to say. Here we live all the on the borders of a more radiant country into ch we may enter when we take to heart the fact of , of his forgiveness, of his goodness.

The angels keep their ancient places;
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.
Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

o sang Francis Thompson.

s the angels' voices break the silence above the of Bethlehem, I too am caught up by the heavenly ic. Their song is the very song I would be singing, God's good will toward men vouchsafed in Christ. he shepherds now are awakened and I follow ı, folk of lowly birth, as, having heard the prom- they go to find their Lord. How often life's true satisfactions are withheld from the sophisticated and from those whose only wealth is in possessions, and are given to those of simple heart and mind! The first to discover Christ after his birth were shepherds.

WISE MEN—AND A CRUEL KING

But they did not remain the only ones for long. Already there were others traveling toward Bethlehem. The wise as well as the simple took pains to come to him. It may be true that many of humble station come to Christ directly, intuitively, while the intellectuals start farther off and take a longer road. They must see him as the key to their philosophy. But at the instant of their coming wise men were on the way. Christ lays his claim upon the men of science and of learning. The cultured and the influential as well as those of lowly birth find in him life and truth and light. There, among the wise men, I too bring all my trophies both of intellect and art and lay them at his feet.

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Arrived at Jerusalem with the wise men, I see Herod, embodiment of all that was worst in Roman rule. He was quite willing to destroy the most precious thing, the world's best hope, that which might bring men out of wars and slaughter, out of their hatreds and divisions and turmoil. Herod turned on all the babies of Bethlehem and killed them in the hope of putting an end to Christ. But tyranny and slaughter never do by their methods wholly exterminate the spirit of love and of good will. Let them do their worst. There is that in Christ and in his principles which outlasts the evil and endures. And though there

The Meaning of Christmas

By William C. Kernan

THE WORLD will never be the same again. Christ was born here. If men ever thought that life here was futile, self-defeating, a maze of wandering from despair to despair to inevitable death, they can think so no longer. Ours is not that kind of world. It is the kind of world in which the sick can be healed, and sin forgiven, and the dead raised. It is the kind of world in which Christ was born and in which he must reign. Men who believe can become "more than conquerors" through him who loved them and gave himself for them.

Let us not surrender the world to the devil. Let us rather affirm with every breath our right to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." For this is Christmas, and Christ has been born in Bethlehem. The Light shines in the darkness, and the Eternal word of Gid manifests himself in our midst in power and great glory. We belong there, with him, on the side of power and glory. We do not belong to the devil. He is not our master, after all. Christ is.

Let us, therefore, as the servants of God, "cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light now in the time of this mortal life in which our Lord Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility."

Let us begin to rebuild the world. There are men enslaved by fierce passions who must be released from them, and men in dungeons to be set free. There are children who cry from fear and from hunger whose tears must be dried. There are women who watch for the dawn of that day which will justify their sacrifice of husbands and sons in the war. And they must not watch in vain. There is a world to be redeemed and rebuilt, free of fear and free of hate.

We need not despair about that. It can be rebuilt. We are not without resources to do it—the resources of God who can "cast out our sin, and enter in," and be born in us this day. Nothing is impossible with God who, Christmas assures us, is with us. We are not alone. Christ has been here and abides here. The Light shines and God reigns. This is the meaning of Christmas.

may be moments when I follow Herod, in killing the best impulses that come into my heart; yet I cannot put an end to that which is born of God.

It is this personalness about the stories that surround the birth of Jesus that give them their never failing appeal. At every point I meet myself. Were you not at Bethlehem too?

'A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE NATIONS'

But above all the rest there stands one master Figure. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. . . . A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of my people Israel." Like trumpet-calls these words of annunciation come. We know—how desperately we of the twentieth century know!—that we need someone to rescue us and our people from their sins. We need look no farther than the front pages of the newspapers, we need recall nothing more than the names and events that have made headlines, to realize the need of a Savior. We need some force to work moral regeneration in our world. Character we need in high places. And we need light—"light to lighten the nations"—wisdom, judgment to guide us in our individual and national and international affairs. We look forward with eager longing for the better day that shall dawn. We scan the horizon for a leader who can bring about the transformation and usher in that golden time when men shall act with rationality and benevolence toward one another. And ours is not the first age thus to long and cry out: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" We long, as every generation before u longed, for an assured hope for ourselves and fo race.

How dull our hearts! Were the words n familiar, they would leap out at us from the pag the Book: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, fo shall save his people from their sins." The festiv Christmas is upon us. And shall our hearts be And shall we turn cold looks toward him whose we celebrate? Why not receive him, let him s into our lives with power?

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
There is room in my heart for thee!

TEN THOUSAND years ago savages knew enou pass on the traditions of their clans, but some m parents seem to be less sensible than savages. W shall we moderns learn that the traditions of our are not just doctrines laid down by Puritans, truths solved by the ages?

JAMES GORDON GILK

I AM obsessed by an idea, namely, that we moral more than political reforms. We seem to lost all sense of honesty, of loyalty, and of the word. And I wonder whether the present peri really qualified to give the previous periods lesso morality.

EDOUARD HERRI

A Pastoral Prayer

BY FRANK HALLIDAY FERRIS

GOD of all goodness and grace, from whom every good gift cometh, who openest Thine hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, new are Thy mercies every morning and Thy faithfulness every night. On the morning of the first day of the new week we thank Thee for the benefits we receive from Thy fatherly hand: for health and energy, sunshine and rain, seedtime and harvest, the food which comes forth from the earth to nourish us, the flowers which come forth from the earth to delight us with their bright beauty of color and form; for the day with its rich opportunities to work, to play, to learn, to serve; for night with its train of stars and its great gift of sleep; for the warm clasp of friendly hands, the everlengthening web of association which binds us to our friends; for hours of high communion with the seers and singers of our race; for the bits of unselfishness with which we have brightened other lives and others have brightened ours, the words of cheer and encouragement we have given to those bearing heavy burdens and others have given to us; for the sense of continuity which makes of the present a bridge between a past of memories and a future of anticipation; for the church, the beloved community of memory and forever reminding us of the help in ages past, the for years to come; for the love that arches al years.

Through Thee we would send affectionate me to our beloved on both sides of the doorway w death, for all are one in Thee and all are Thine. thank Thee for the mystic ties which bind us tog in Thee. Help us to show our gratitude in ways will ensure to those who come after us as mu good as we have received from those who have before, that we too may help the sons of men to tinue their toilsome pilgrimage toward the city hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is

Send us forth from this hour of meditation prayer to face whatever the morrow may bring high heart and firm confidence; to live in a di time as they ought to live who know that the e God is their refuge and underneath are the everl arms. Unto Thee, who art able to guard us stumbling and to present us before the presence o glory with exceeding joy, be glory and majesty minion and power, now and evermore. Amen.

Timely Verse

'e Have Seen His Star in the East'

'E HAVE seen His star in the East,"
In the East where it first stood still,
'e have heard the song of the angel throng,
"And on earth, peace, good will!"
ut the little lights confuse,
The nearer sounds obsess,
nd our hearts withhold from the Lord of Love
The lives He would use and bless.

We have seen His star in the East,"
His shining dream of the good,
Vhen men shall claim in the Father's name
Their right to brotherhood.
) little lights, grow dim,
O nearer sounds, be still,
Vhile our hearts remember Bethlehem,
And a cross on a far green hill!

MOLLY ANDERSON HALEY.

At Christmastide

HOW FAR they throw their cheer, their gracious glow,
The Christmases that happened long ago!
Over what silences they have their way
When hearts come to their own, today!
Each to its secret hoard of gold and myrrh—
Treasured, how long!—from out the years that were:
Old songs, old laughter; still their echoes ring,
Flooding the empty hours with welcoming!
Dear handclasps, swift and warm with ministries—
What matters space, or time, to such as these?
The precious past that none beside can know—
Calling us back, and will not let us go!

O friend, be comforted that memory brings
The gift of changeless, sure and hallowed things!
Closer today they press on every side
Always and always ours, at Christmastide.

LAURA SIMMONS.

What Makes You Think It's Christmas?

A SERMON FOR CHILDREN BY VIRGIL E. FOSTER

HAT makes you think that Christmas is coming? Is it the colorful decorations you see in tore windows, in homes along the street and per- in your own home? Is it the calendar which s you believe Christmas is coming? Is it the gay ed lights, the music you hear, or the Christmas for sale on the corner? Could it be a strange h you feel creeping over you that presents are ; prepared somewhere?

ristmas comes and goes quickly. After a while will be no Christmas trees and lights to remind "peace on earth, good will toward men." Soon lecorations in store windows will be changed, the stmas music will be over and the presents will no r be new. Then we can settle down once more ing just as we did before Christmas. Or can we?

'GLORIFYING AND PRAISING GOD'

es all of Christmas come to an end for you when Christmas tree is gone? Or will your enjoyment ing things for others to make them happy con- beyond the days of pretty lights and the singing rols?

the story of the first Christmas, which we read e Bible, shepherds and wise men came to see Jesus e manger. There is something strange about the . The account of the journey of the wise men with the simple statement, after they had given gifts to Jesus, that they departed into their own ry another way. The account of the journey of hepherds, however, ends with the statement that they returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.

Life was different, after they had seen Jesus, for the shepherds. Life could never be for them what it was before. It was something more—more wonderful and challenging. They could not forget the Christ Child, remembering him only on his birthdays. What had happened was so important that they wanted to tell their friends about it. They went home to their friends glorifying and praising God for the thing that had come to pass.

Life was probably changed for the wise men, too; but that is not pointed out in the story. We can only hope that they, too, went on through life doing things to make others happy as they had brought gifts to the Christ Child.

We would not wish to keep our Christmas trees up the year 'round. We cannot expect presents every day. Yet, the really good things about Christmas are best when we keep them all through the year. Making folks happy is a lot of fun any day of the year. A good song is nice to hear any time of the year. The things that Jesus said and did are worth paying attention to every day. Love and kindness are much better than selfishness in the hot summertime as well as when the sleighbells ring.

How much of your Christmas will be over when the Christmas tree is gone? How much of it will be yours every morning, every noonday, every evening the year through? The shepherds returned to their shepherding glorifying and praising God. What will you do to carry the spirit of Christmas on through the year?

Preaching and Religion Today

By John Haynes Holmes

IT IS IMPORTANT to consider preaching afresh today in the light of its present plight and of its historic dignity and importance. Preaching is the language of the soul. It is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. In its true estate, it is the noblest of the arts; in its highest use, it is the salvation of mankind. From Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to Gandhi's Sermon on the Sea, it is the testament of God. Yet it is held today in neglect, oft-times contempt; and even when respected and heeded, has but remnants of its old authority.

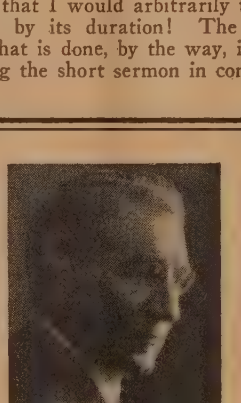
There are forces in our time that are eating away at preaching as termites eat away at the foundations of a building. There are tendencies in this age that ebb and flow away from preaching, as an ocean tide flows away from a ship and leaves it stranded upon the shore. Things trivial and momentous combine in mutual conspiracy to still the voice of religion.

● *Preaching Then and Now*

The multiplicity of interests, for example, that press upon us—the crowded hours in which we wake! There was a time when religion was the central concern of life, and the sermon the chief utterance of man. Those were the days when the minister took an hourglass into his pulpit, and at the end of the first hour turned it over to begin the second. Channing's Baltimore Sermon ran to more than twelve thousand words, and must have taken at least an hour and forty minutes to deliver. When Daniel Webster died, Theodore Parker preached a sermon that lasted two hours and three-quarters to a congregation that forgot their Sunday dinners. There was time, in those days, for a preacher to turn around, to develop his theme, to adorn his periods, to unfold his vision. But now we are overwhelmed by interests clamoring for our attention.

When I began my ministry in New York, Sunday was still a day set apart for religious services and sermons. In a period of forty years we have seen the day beset by automobiles, the movie, the radio, golf, baseball, symphony concerts and recitals, and the institution of the out-of-town week end. If it is to be gotten in at all, the Sunday service must be short, and the sermon shorter. With the result that most sermons are picayune affairs—pleasant little essays, or diversions of thought! A real sermon should be organized like a military campaign into an enemy's country, with an array of ideas "as terrible as an army with banners." Instead we are getting sermons that are like picnics into a near-by countryside for innocent exercise and play. A brief excursion, and they are over!

Not that I would arbitrarily test a sermon by its duration! The very thing that is done, by the way, in advocating the short sermon in contrast



John Haynes Holmes

to the long, as though brevity itself constituted merit apart from content and style! Thus are we constantly reminded of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural, as though he had never spoken his long First Inaugural, his extended Cooper Union Address, and his hours-long debates with Stephen Douglas. What I am insisting is that you can't bind the sermon in a chronological straitjacket, and expect it to be free and mighty. There is such a thing as putting the pure essence of thought into small compass, but this is no more preaching than a golden statuette by Benvenuto Cellini is sculpture.

A sermon, if worthy of itself, must have range and scope, as well as depth and height. It must expand to the measure of its appointed themes of God, immortality and the soul. The quality which Phillips Brooks found most lacking in the sermons of his time was "breadth." And by "breadth" he said he did not mean "tolerance of opinion or anything of that kind, (but) largeness of movement, the great utterance of great truths great enforcement of great dut distinct from the minute, the and ingenious treatment of littl ics, side issues of the soul's But great sermons of this type c be confined within the conven fifteen or twenty minutes of the ent day. A heavenly discourse have what Schubert gave his C- symphony—"a heavenly length."

Not every man can be a preacher, but all men can stri attain to their tallest stature. can be encouraged to stretch muscles, to expand their minds enlarge the place of their tents." theological student should be t to think big thoughts, and to d them along big lines to big ends. preacher should mount his pul Sunday morning prepared to w not with time but with eternity for the church, it should have e dignity, self-respect and faith t its minister full opportunity t his strength, like a bird its win sustained flights through the very ament of thought.

● *The Influence of Sc and the F*

A second unfortunate influence preaching these days is the c which has come over our st public speaking. I can think cause for this transformation that of science, which has taug to magnify reason at the expe emotion. There must be no f in our use of thought these day we be unfaithful to the scientific We must be cool, calm, objectiv moved by any personal enthu or even concern, least of all b divine frenzy. Otherwise we not have that attitude of pur interestedness which can alone to us reality. This has induc to a type of public speaking wh at the opposite pole from pa which Jonathan Swift describ the secret of all noble utterance sion is the last thing we want Our thought must not blaze lik lest it consume the truth. must it congeal like ice, that i preserve the truth.

And now comes the radio to man a part of a machine for th jection of the human voice ov vast spaces of the air! What k eloquence is it that can be p into a microphone? How much ing is kindled in the breast orator who sees no audience

vs no reaction of soul to soul? t broadcasting has an art of its I have no doubt. What this art be was shown by President ievelt in broadcasts that marked w epoch in the history of human nunication. But this art is no e the art of oratory than the radio ia is the art of histrionics. Which is that a blight is spreading over emporary speaking which, caught he tentacles of the radio, is in process of being squeezed of its able life-blood!

● *A Plea for Prophetic Preaching*

plead, in the case of preaching, for covery of that form of elevated ch which will touch the dry bones eason with prophetic passion, and e them live again. Preaching, Phillips Brooks, in his *Lectures Preaching,* is a compound of truth personality. But personality also compound. In its highest estate, it ir more than any mere exercise eason. It includes all the attri- s of man's being, physical as well sychological or spiritual. Think Phillips Brooks and what it took ake him the supreme preacher of last half of the last century. A nificent physique, a commanding ence, a countenance radiant with rd beauty, a voice that rang with tial tones, a torrent of eloquent ch, unquenchable, uncontrollable, h poured from his lips like a iet from a living spring! Think utting this man behind a micro- e! The preacher, you say, must k calmly, quietly, dispassionately? o do you think this preacher is? A rter, merely. who gives us facts erene and pleasant voice? Not remembers and responds to the of his ordination.

he true preacher is an advocate, defends great causes of human ; he is an artist, who depicts glowing colors the beauty of holi- ; he is a minstrel, who sings songs ie soul's melody; he is a seer, who als reality seen only "in the mind's These are the parts that he t play—and, if he is to play them tively, he must command the lan- ge, the color, the music, the in- tion of them all. These cannot reduced to the calm cadence of reason. It is not enough for sermon to follow, with whatsoever ision, a line of thought. It must and sing—catch a vision and ose it to other men. There is a told of Henry Ward Beecher on a certain occasion ended his urse with a spontaneous and elo- t description of an angel keep- watch on the ramparts of heaven, in splendor, and holding in his a spear, tipped with a silver "How did you ever think of that star?" asked a listener, after the service. "I didn't think of it," said Beecher, "I saw it."

Why are we getting so little ecstatic speech of this kind in our pulpits today? What has become of "rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire"? The times are all against such utterance, it is true. But are the theological schools doing all they can to kindle and nurse the flame? What might it not mean if these schools led their students deliberately along the heights of great oratory, from Demosthenes and Cicero to Daniel Webster and John Bright, and thus acquainted them at first hand with the art of homiletical mountain-climbing? Why should there not be courses in great literature, so that the students might become as familiar with Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton as with Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin and Schleiermacher? What could be wiser, or more profitable, than for the years of theological study to be accompanied by stern disciplines of the spirit, so that the students might be led to those mystic realms where may be found the gift of tongues? The restoration of great religion waits upon the restoration of great preaching. The preacher, let us remember, in the Emersonian phrase, is "a bard of the Holy Ghost." Is it not the first duty of the school to take this "bard" while he is still "new-born," and lead him to sacred altars, where live coals may be lifted, and laid upon his lips?

● *Socialized Christianity —and Preaching*

A third unfortunate influence upon preaching these days springs from what we have learned to call the social applications of Christianity. The church is no longer merely a pulpit for preaching and an altar for worship, but is become an institution for the conduct of good works in the community. The minister is not only a prophet and a priest, but is now supposed to be an executive, an administrator, a director of public enterprises, a member of committees and social agencies, a leader of various political and economic reforms—an active servant of society as well of the church. The sermon, now only one of many functions, has inevitably and in some cases deplorably suffered.

To many of you it will be a surprise that I should thus speak of socialized Christianity as intruding upon preaching, when I have all my life been an advocate of this interpretation of Jesus' gospel. It was preaching that took me into the ministry. Since I can remember, I have existed under the spell of words, as others have existed under the spell of music or design, and I have yearned to exercise this spell upon mankind. But at the very time that I entered the divinity school, there came what has been called the social awakening of the churches. The influence of William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker was already strong upon me, but now came the giants of my own day—Edward Everett Hale, Francis G. Peabody, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Edward A. Ross, and that heroic prophet and saintly man, Walter Rauschenbusch, and his great book, *Christianity and the Social Crisis.* I emerged from Harvard all aflame with social passion—still yearning to preach, but determined to make my preaching an agent for the reform of the social order, the abolition of the twin evils of poverty and war. It was not long before I discovered what a drain upon my time and strength was active service in the community.

I began my ministry with the determination to be a scholar, for I believed that preaching must have its roots in scholarship. I remembered fondly the story of old Dr. Nathaniel Emmons, the famous Puritan divine of the 18th century—how, when he died, it was found that the legs of his desk chair had so worn themselves into the floor of his study, that the chair could not be moved, but had to be lifted out of the holes which had been dug through the years by Emmons' prolonged pursuit of learning. But my scholarly ambitions departed early—and I am scandalized by the superficial materials of knowledge hastily gathered and thrown together in my sermons.

I have dreamed for years of being a preacher in the great tradition—and it saddens and almost sickens me to think of the Sundays scattered through my life when I have climbed into my pulpit with a sermon half-prepared, a body almost too tired to stand, and a mind too confused and distraught to be focussed upon the business of the hour. Now, when my work is all but done, and I have left only a few scant years of waning energy, I dream, as Charles Lamb dreamed of his children that were never born, of the sermons I might have preached, of the hymns I might have written, of the books I might have published, had I not given the best strength of my life to social causes. It is a real question—Was I wise or foolish in doing what I did?

● *How Protect the Prophetic Preacher?*

Of course, the time will come when the church will select and specialize its ministers. Preachers will be protected in their sacred calling. The Protestant churches will take example of the great Catholic Church, and when they find a preacher, will set him aside for the work of prophecy, and nothing else. You know how Rome has preaching orders to which

the men with high gifts of speech and spirit are consigned, that they may not be worn out by parochial duties, ecclesiastical offices, and social activities in the community, but dedicated utterly to what is chosen for them as the mission of their lives. Rome is too wise to be fooled by the sentimental delusion that a preacher must exhaust himself in human contacts in order to have living material for his sermons. This is a mere manufactured excuse for making the minister a helpless and hopeless man of all work! But some day the Protestant churches will wake up, and conserve their preachers for their own appointed calling.

Meanwhile, failing this, the preachers in our churches must conserve themselves as best they can. If we wonder sometimes why it is, under the circumstances of this busy world and crowded life, that preaching in our Protestant churches is so often of a high order, I am convinced it is because the preachers are more and more learning to establish their own conditions of protection. Years ago I discovered, in my own modest case, that if my preaching was not to collapse utterly, I must deliberately, even ruthlessly, hedge myself about with impassable barriers. It is now two decades and more since I received any callers at my study except by special appointment. Certain hours of the day are mine, not to be intruded upon. Two evenings of each week at least I must have at home for rest, recreation and quiet. Saturday is a day sacred to myself, as Sunday is a day sacred to my people. With rare exceptions, I see nobody, I answer no telephone calls, I accept no engagements, I stay rigorously at home, and in these latter years I spend a good part of the day in bed. All this may sound silly, self-conscious, self-important. Why should a preacher take himself so seriously? To which question the answer is obvious—that he must first take himself seriously if anybody else is ever to take him seriously!

(To be continued next month)

smallest atom of matter and u energy. Surely a God of justic love who gave man the yearnin truth, beauty and goodness wil permit life's drama to end i blackout of the tomb. Our war did not seek rest or slumber. I revise our figures of speech pict immortality. Let us think o dead as still struggling, fighti create a society in which men not only dream dreams but them.

III. Conclusion—Here is a soling thought for the host o reaved families—that, since the dane powers will need the alli heaven to establish the Kingdo God on earth, their dead still l the sense they once lived; earthly careers cut down at no have not terminated in sleep; r they march on to the fulfillme those goals which were most rea noblest in their earthly lives personalities.

(Albert G. Minda, Temple I Minneapolis, Minn.)

Sermon Outlines from PULPIT Readers

They Shall Not Rest

I. Introduction—The figures of speech which men have most used to describe death and to depict the idea of immortality make death synonymous with sleep and immortality a form of eternal rest. The reclining posture of the human body and the closed eyelids have suggested to man the resemblance of sleep, and his fondest petition has been, *Requiescat in pace*—"May he rest in peace." And Bryant counsels man:

> Sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust approach thy grave,
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

II. Body of Sermon—(1) The figures of speech which make death and slumber synonymous are paradoxical. The human being, while demanding slumber and rest as part of life's program, would not ask for a sleep that is protracted. Many, approaching death, exclaim: "So little done! So much to do!" This sense of incompleteness has inspired the idea of the life beyond as that which enables man to continue the activities which he has cherished here. The artist Corot rebelled against the idea of eternal slumber when he said, "I hope with all my heart there will be painting in heaven." Sir Henry Irving said: "I believe in immortality, but if I am allowed to express any preference I shall ask to be allowed to play Shakespeare's dramas for all eternity."

(2) Making death synonymous with eternal slumber becomes doubly inadequate from the point of view of the sacrifices in wartime. Many of the dead in war had barely begun their lives; they had dreamed dreams only to have them blotted out through no fault of their own but because of the sins of a world that could not stay the hand of war. How inadequate for them are the words:

> How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
> By all their country's wishes blest!

Out of World War I emerged a spirit of rebellion against death as slumber:

> Take up our quarrel with the foe!
> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch—be yours to hold it high!
> If ye break faith with us who die,
> We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
> In Flanders Fields.

The interest evinced in spiritualism following the last war was another form of rebellion against the "slumber" concept of death. And today countless bereaved parents and others rebel against a concept of immortality which grants only repose to their valiant dead.

(3) Whatever validity the idea of immortality possesses rests on the faith that the values of personality are too precious to be destroyed in a universe designed to conserve even the

God have mercy on the church sinners cease coming to its door

Jesus did not come to inspire but confidence.

Special privilege always ent special responsibility.

Most of us know many thing have not learned.

Roy L. Smi

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Book of the Month

American Theological Committee: "The Nature of the Church" (July)
Beveridge, Sir William: "Full Employment in a Free Society" (April)
Bosley, Harold A.: "The Philosophical Heritage of the Christian Faith" (February)
Federal Council Committtee: "The Relation of the Church to the War" (January)
Freeman, Elmer S.: "The Lord's Supper in Protestantism" (September)
Hayek, Friedrich A.: "The Road to Serfdom" (April)
Isserman, Ferdinand M.: "This Is Judaism" (March)
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Smith, Roy L.: "Know Your Bible" (October)
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Pastoral Prayers

Beach, King D. (January, May)
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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

*REV. ERDMANN SMITH was dean of Okla*homa Baptist University for 14 years and president of Ottawa University for 7 years. Entering the active ministry, he was pastor of Austin Baptist Church, Chicago, for 13 years, and in 1944 became minister of Delmar Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo. He has been a leader in the national activities of his denomination. He is now in his ninth year as a member of the Budget Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention.

As pastor of the Methodist Church in Princeton, N. J., Rev. LYNN HOUGH CORSON has a wide ministry to students. He has held this important post since 1942.

Following his graduation from Andover Newton Theological School, Rev. GEORGE G. PARKER held pastorates at Jaffrey, N. H., and Spencer, Mass. He is at present minister of the Congregational Church in Manhasset, Long Island, N. Y.

A graduate of Princeton University and of Union Theological Seminary, Rev. WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, JR., was for a number of years pastor of the First Presby Church, Glendale, Ohio. About five years ago he b minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Sprin Ill., the church which was once attended by Ab Lincoln.

Rev. HOLLAND F. BURR *has since 1941 mini* at Piedmont Community Church, Piedmont, Cal residential district adjoining Oakland and Berkeley, In earlier years he served Oneonta Congrega Church, South Pasadena, Calif., and First Congrega Church, Tacoma, Wash. He was graduated from Theological Seminary.

Rev. FRANK HALLIDAY FERRIS *is minister of* mount Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio.

Rev. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES *has since 1907* minister of the Community Church (formerly Chu the Messiah), New York.

Rev. VIRGIL E. FOSTER *is associate minister a* ond Congregational Church, West Newton, Mass.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ALBERT R. PHILLIPS, Emmanuel Baptist, New York. "A Charge Against the Churches." Luke 14:34, 35—"Salt is excellent indeed; but if salt becomes insipid, what will restore its flavor? it is no use for either soil or dung hill, it is flung out. He who has an ear let him listen to this." (Moffatt)

ROBERT M. PRATT, Unitarian, Quincy, Ill. "Religion for One World." Rom. 15:1—"Now we that are strong ought to help them that are weak, and not to please ourselves. But let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good for building him up." Rom. 14:7—"For none of us liveth to himself; but we are members one of another." Also 1 Cor. 12; Phil. 2.

JOHN C. PETRIE, Unitarian, Houston, Tex. "Wherein Is Our Hope?" Jer. 17:5, 7—"Thus saith Jehovah: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah. . . . Blessed is the man who trusteth in Jehovah, and whose trust Jehovah is." 1 Thess. 1:3—"your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

HARVEY HOWEY, Oakwood United, Toronto, Can. "Stand still; Go Forward." Exod. 14:13, 15—"Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, a the salvation of the Lord. . . . And the Lord said Moses, . . . speak unto the children of Israel, tha go forward."

LOWELL R. DITZEN, First Presbyterian, Utica, N "The Return to Bethlehem." Matt. 2:12—"[The men] departed into their own country another Luke 2:20—"And the shepherds returned, glor and praising God."

MARION DE VELDER, Hope Church (Reformed), Ho Mich. "When Life Kicks Back." Eph. 5:15, 16— then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, b wise, redeeming the time, because the days are

DURWARD B. BROWN, Central Methodist, Wheelin Va. "Christian Character in Action." Luke 16 "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful a much."

C. SUMPTER LOGAN, Frst Presbyterian, Lawrenc Ill. "Will Universal Military Conscription D Us?" Isa. 33:22—"The Eternal himself rules u Eternal is our captain, the Eternal is our king; alone, defends us." (Moffatt)

THOMAS R. PENDELL, Linda Vista Methodist, San Cal. "The Valley of Dead Men's Bones." 37:11—"Our bones are dried up, and our hope is we are clean cut off." (Goodspeed)

CHARLES R. ROWE, First Methodist, Salt Lake Utah. "Life's Flaming Bushes." Exod. 3:2—"An angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a fla fire out of the midst of a bush."

JOHN PITTS, Old First, Bloomfield, N. J. "Wh Religion?" James 1:27—"Pure religion and und before God and the Father is this: To visit the f less and widows in their affliction, and to keep hi unspotted from the world."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of sermon

Text used (write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

DECISION has been reached to assemble another gathering of Protestant church representatives similar to that held in Cleveland, Ohio, last uary, to consider the postwar world scene and to e Christian attitudes and action in meeting the enormous problems which it presents to the churches. The decision was taken by the Federal Council's commission just and durable peace, under whose auspices the ware and Cleveland conferences were held. The recommended is some time in the spring of 1946. estantism has no other way of reaching a consensus uch urgent public issues than by convening such nblies. In this respect it moves more slowly than olicism, whose hierarchy has already issued a rful, albeit in some points a questionable, manifesto he duty of the church in the postwar world. The eland conference was concerned chiefly with the ion of an international organization. Its influence he great project launched at San Francisco was ound. But new burdens now rest upon the con- ce of the church. The war is over. But there is eace. A world of chaos and hunger and bitterness revolution has come out of the war, and Christians to their leaders to define the tasks which this kind orld lays upon the church of Christ. The time for aration of the proposed conference is admittedly t. But the commission of which John Foster Dulles airman feels that a delay will involve irretrievable in the morale of the churches and in the steady rioration of the world scene. The place of meeting be announced as soon as arrangements can be made.

ther "Cleveland" Prospect

The Book of the Month

CHRISTIAN ANSWER. *By five theologians—Tillich, reene, Thomas, Aubrey and Knox. Edited by enry P. Van Dusen. Scribners. $2.50.*

ERE is a book that plows deep furrows in the soil of modern civilization and turns up realities and problems which have lain hidden from the t even of Christian thinkers all too long. The plan he book is unique. Prof. Paul J. Tillich presents nalysis of "The World Situation." He then gives to four collaborators who undertake to state the istian answer to this situation. Prof. Theodore M. ene presents the secular alternatives to the Christian , showing their inadequacy to meet the the situation osed by Tillich. He then develops the reasonable- of Christianity as over against these alternatives. f. George F. Thomas presents the Christian answer erms of the ruling concepts which constitute the istian ideology—Revelation, the Bible, God, Cre- n, Man, Sin, Christ, the Creeds, the Atonement, ation, the new life, the Kingdom of God. President E. E. Aubrey undertakes to give the Christian answer to the world situation in its social aspect. He finds that the gospel of Christ alone meets the four demands of modern man for security, unity, freedom and significance or meaning. Prof. John Knox brings the whole problem of the world situation back to the individual Christian. "What must I do to be just" in such a world as this? he asks. The dilemmas of the Christian life are frankly and penetratingly faced and the Christian answer defined. This book is one of the most important interpretations of Christian faith that have appeared. Do not assume that because it is written by theologians it is therefore abstruse or difficult reading. It will grip you the moment you open it. And you will lay it down with a sense of intellectual expansion and of renewed faith.

A Thought for the Month

MODERN preaching of tolerance has brought us into confusion. The concept, as generally used, has three meanings. One meaning applies to the political realm: a democratic state should tolerate diversity of opinion among its citizens—that is, give them complete freedom to hold and express whatever opinions seem to them true. This is good tolerance. Its opposite is totalitarianism, a system under which the state prescribes and controls opinion. A second meaning applies to the individual: he should respect the opinions of others and hold his own opinions in all humility. Such tolerance also is good. This is a fundamental condition of our living together in happiness and peace. The opposite of this kind of tolerance is fanaticism, which is a dangerous form of egotism. The third popular meaning of tolerance is indifference. My opinion is my private affair; yours is your private affair; it makes no difference which of us, if indeed either of us, is right. This kind of tolerance is bad. Yet it represents a mood that is widespread today. Under its influence conviction is dissolved in sentimentalism. This false tolerance is a corruption of both forms of true tolerance. Because the state should be neutral toward divergent opinions it is easily assumed that the citizen should likewise be neutral. And because I ought to respect the convictions of others and hold my own in humility, it is an easy step to the conclusion that my convictions do not matter anyhow. This indifferentism has eaten far into the modern mind and especially into religious faith. Catholicism has its own way of resisting it. Liberal Judaism makes a virtue of it and, as I believe, to its own detriment. And liberal Protestantism, in its desire to do justice to minority faiths, has allowed its own faith to be watered down with good will and bad tolerance into a loose and flabby sentimentalism.

Tolerance—Good and Bad

Charles Clayton Morrison

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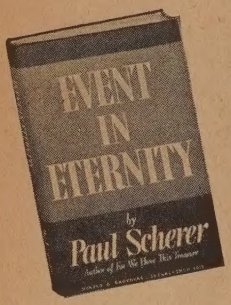

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